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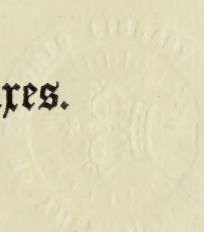
91 I

Vox Populi vox Dei,

A Complaynt

Of

The Comons against Taxes.



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The Common Law

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To the
Kings moste excellent Maiestie*

I praye yo^u be not wrothe
For tellinge of the trothe
For this the worlde it gothe
Bothe to lyfe and to lothe
As God him self he knothe
And as all men understand
Bothe lordeshipes and lands
Are now in few mens hands
Bothe substance and bands
Of all the whole realme
Are now consumed cleane
As moste men exteme
Frome the fermer and the powre
To the towne and the towere
Which makethe them to lowere
To see that in their flowere
Is neyther malte nor meale
Bacon hyfe nor veale
Cocke mylke nor keale
But redy for to steale
For very pure neede
Poure comens saye in dede

* From the M. S. Harl. 367. fol. 130.

They be not abell to fede
 In there stable skant a stede
 To byng up nor to biede
 Nor skant abel to brenge
 To the markett any thynge
 Towards there howse kepinge
 And skant have a cowe
 Nor to kepe a powye sowe /
 Thus the waylde ys nowe
 And to here the relasjon
 Of the powye mens commuycaſion
 Under whatt sortte and fashyon
 They make there exclamaſyon
 How wolde have compaſſion
 Thus gothe ther proteſtation
 Sayenge that ſuche and ſuche
 That of latte aze mayde ryche
 Have to to /to myche
 By graſyng and regzatynge
 By powlyng and debattynge
 By rolyng and by dattynge
 By cheke and cheke matynge
 With delays and debatyng
 With cowſtomes and tallngs
 Forſayttts and foze ſtallyngs
 So that youze commen * ſaye

* Altered by another hand pomen.

They shal paye paye
Most wyllyngly alwaye
But yett they se noe staye
Of this owtt rage a raye

For populi /vor Dei
O most nobell kynge
Consider well this thynge/

¶ And thus the woyle dothe mbltpplye
 Amowngs your grasis commynalte
 They are in suche grette penury
 That thay caner nether sell ner bye
 Such ys there extzeme powertey
 Expeyzens dothe it verypye
 As trowthe yt selte dothe testyfy
 This is a mezbellbis melizie
 And trow they say it is no lye
 For grasiars and regrateys
 With soe many thepe maisteyz
 That of ezabell grounde make pasteyz
 Are they that be thes wasteyz
 That wyll undoe this lande
 Yf thay contynw and stande
 As ye shall vnderstounde
 By this lytell bowke
 Yf youze grace it overlouke
 And ober louke it agayne
 Hit wyll tyll yow soo playne
 The tenyze and the trowthe
 Howe this wazld now gowthe
 With my neghtbore and my nost
 In eveyz cowntye towne and cost

Within the circumbitions
 Of your grasis domynions
 And whye the powre men wepe
 For stawpyng of such shepe
 For that soo many kype
 Suche number and suche stowre
 And never was sene befoze
 What wolde ye any moze
 The ingresse was never moze
 Thus gothe the woyle and rowze
 And trelwth it ys in dede
 For all men now doo brede
 That cane chache any lande
 Dutt of the polye mens hande
 For whome is soe grett a grolier
 As the lozde and the laweer
 For ebery drawyng daye
 The bocher moze most paye
 For his fattyng waze
 And to be the moze redyer
 A nother tyme to craue
 When he moze shepe wolde haue
 And to elywatte the pryce
 Summe whatt he most ryffe
 With a synke or a sylle
 Soo that the bocher cans not spaze
 Towards his charges and is faze
 To sell the veze carchasse baze

Under rij^s or a marke
 Wiche is a pytyfull werke
 Be syde the offal and the sice
 The sice and the fell
 Thus he dothe it selle
 A. las A. las A. las
 This is a pitywos chaffe
 Whatt powze man nowe is abell
 To have mette one is tabell
 An ore at syde pownde
 If he be any thing rownde
 Or ells come not in the grownde
 Suche laboze for to waste
 This is the new caste
 The new cast frome the olde
 This commen pze thay holde
 Wiche is a were rewthe
 If men myght saye the trwth
 Pouze pomen* thus doo saye
 If thaye have it /thws thay paye

Vox populi vox Dei
 O most nobell kynge
 Consyder well this thynge

* This word seems to have been again changed from cōmen.

¶ Howe saye ye to this my lordes
 Are not thes playne recordes
 We knowe as well as I
 Thus makes the commons crye
 This makes them crye and wepe
 Dylefying foe there shepe
 There shepe and eke ther beffes
 As yll and worse then theffes
 Unto a comon welth
 This is a vere felth
 But you that wyll this bett
 Howe lords that be greett
 You wold not paye so for youre mette
 Except your grasping waze soo swett
 Or ells feze me I
 Howe fynde some remedy
 In tyme and that right shortlye
 But yett this extremyte
 Non felys it but the comynalte
 A. las ys there noe remede
 To helpe them of there mesure
 If there shoulde come a rayne
 To make a derthe of grayne
 As God maye sende it playne
 For our covitis and disdayne

I wolde knowe amonngs all
 What he were that howlde not fall
 And sorowt as he wente
 For Gods ponyshementte
 A. las this were a plage
 For powertes passession
 Towardis ther suppression
 For the grett mens transgressyon
 A. las my lordes for see
 There maye be remede
 For poure powre comens saye
 They have noe more to paye

Hor populi vox Dei
 O most nobell kynge
 Consyder well this thyng

4.

And yett not lowng agoo
 Was precharz one or tooe
 That spake it plene enowgh
 To yow to yow and to yowe
 Highe tyme for to repent
 This develyfche in tente
 Of covitis the convente
 Frome Skottland into Kente
 This precheng was be sprent
 And frome the est fount
 Unto saynt Mychells Mountte
 This sayeng did surmownte
 A byode to all mens heres
 And to your grasps peres
 That frome pyllyr to post
 The powr man he was tosse
 I. mene. the labozeng man
 I. mene. the husbände man
 I. mene. the plowghe man
 I. mene. the handy craft man
 I. mene. the bylyng man
 And also the gud yoman
 That some tyme in this realme
 Hade plente of key and crome

C.

Butter eggs and chesse
 Hony wax and besse
 But now a lacke a lacke
 All thes men gove to wrake
 That are the bodye and staye
 Of your grasis realme alwaye
 Alwaye and at lenght
 They most be youre strenght
 Youre strenght and your teme
 For to defende your realme
 They yf thes men appall
 And lack when ye doe call
 Whiche waye maye you or shall
 Resyst youre enymes all
 That ober ragynge shemes
 Wyl wadde frome foren realmes
 For me to make judiciall
 This matter ys to mysticall
 Iuge youve my lordes for me ye shall
 Youres ys the charge that governes all
 For vox populi me thay call
 That maketh but reerfall
 De parvum but not de totall
 De locis but not locall
 Therfoze ye most not blame
 The wyght that wrott the same
 For the poremen* of this lande
 Hath sone this in theze sande

* Comens *erased*.

Plowghyng it with ther hande
 I fonde it where I ffounde
 And I ame but the hayne
 That wrythe new agayne
 The copy for to see
 That also leznerh me
 To take theze by good hede
 My thepe howe for to fede
 For I a sheparde ame
 A fory powre man
 Yett wolde I wysche my lordes
 This myght be youre recordis
 And make of it nowe dreame
 For it ys a worthei realme
 A reme that in tymes paste
 Hath made the prowdes a gaste
 And now my lordes all
 Note this in especiall
 And have it in memorypall
 With youre wysse unpyersall
 That nether faber nor effeccion
 Powe graunt youre proteccion
 To suche as hath by election
 Shall rewle by erection
 And doth gett the perfeccion
 Of the powre mens refectiion
 Whiche ys a grett innozymyte
 Unto youre grasys commynalte
 For thay that of latt did supe

Dwt of an alchyn cuppe
 He wonderfully sprowng upe
 That nowght was worth of latt
 Hath now a cubbozde of platt
 His tabell furnyscheyd tooe
 With platt be sett I nowe
 Percell gylte and sounde
 Well worth to w thousand pounde†
 With castinge cownters and ther pen
 Thes are the vpkart gentylmen
 Thes are thay that dewowze
 All the goods of the powze
 And makes them dotysche dabys
 Under the cowler of the Kings lawys
 And yett and nother decaye
 To poure grasys Seetes alwaye
 For the statte of all poure marchant men
 Undo most parte of pouze gentyll men
 And wrape them in suche bandes
 That thay have halve ther lands
 And payeth but halfe in hande
 Tyll thay moze understonde
 Of the profett of there lande
 And for the other halfe
 He shalbe mayd a calfe
 Except he have gud frendes
 Wiche well cane waye both endes

† CCⁿ erased.

And yet with frendes tooe
 He shall haue muche to doe
 Whiche ys a grett in noyme
 To youre grasys regallpte
 Lett marchant men goe sayle
 For that ys ther tyme waylle
 For of one C. ye haue not ten
 That now be marchants ventring men
 That occupi grett in awnders
 Forther then into Flanderz
 Flawnderz or in to France
 For feze of some myschance
 But lyeth at home and stands
 By morgage and purchasse of landes
 Dwitt of all gentyll mens handes
 Whiche shold serue alwaye your grace
 With horse and men in chaffe
 Whiche ys a grett dewowze
 Unto youre regall powze
 That presydente cane thay shewe
 That fowze skoze yeres agooe
 That any marchant here
 A bove all charges cleze
 In landes myght lett to hyre
 Too thowfant markes by yere
 Other where shall ye fynde
 A gentyll man by kynde

But that thay wylly in the wynde
 To breng hyme fer be hynde
 Or ells thay wylly have all
 Whi nedes thay hyne for shall
 Whiche ys the hole decaye
 Of your marchant men I saye
 And hynders youre grafys costome
 By the yere a thousand pownde
 And so mazzyth the more petye
 The comon welth of yche Sytte
 And undoth the cowntyre
 As proffe doth make proprietie
 This matter most spesally
 Wolde be loked one quiclye
 Betwixt for ther recreation
 In pastime and procreation
 In tempeyre necessitatis
 I wylsche thay myght have grattis
 Lysens to compownde
 To purchasse fortie pownde
 Or fyfte at the mosse
 By fyne or wyrtte of poss
 And yf any marchant man
 To lyve his occupieng then
 Wolde purchasse any more
 Lett hyme forsett it thezfore
 Then shold ye se the trade
 That marchant men first mayde

Whyche wyse men marshall
 For a welth unyverfall
 Wiche man this lawe to lerne
 And trewly his goods to ywre
 The landlord with his terme
 The plowght man with his ferme
 The kneght wyth his faze
 The marchant with his waze
 Then shold increse the helth
 Of yche comon welthe
 Therefore be not yow wrothe
 For tellyng of the trothe
 For I dooe here it every dawe
 Howe the comons thus doe saye
 If thaye hade it thay wolde paye

Vox populi vox Dei
 O most noble kynge
 Consyder well this thing

Q But howe Robyn howe
 Whiche waye dothe the wynde blowe
 Herke. herke. herke
 Is not this a pityvnis warke
 The grounde and the pithe
 Of all this myscheffe
 For ouze cobitis lordes
 Dothe mynde noe other recordes
 But hamyng fynes for feymes
 With to mythe as some termes
 With rents and remaynders
 With surwaye and surrenders
 With commons and common ingenders
 With in closters and extenders
 With hurd upe but noe spenders
 For a common welth
 This is a vere stelth
 Probe it whowe shall
 To make theze of triall
 Thus gowthe theze diall
 I knowe not what a cloke
 But by the cowntze coke
 Thei anone ner yett the prime
 Antyll the sowne dooe hyne

Or els I colde tyll
 Howe all things shold be well
 The compas maye stand a wyre
 But the card wyll not lye
 Haale in your mayn hete
 This tempeste is to grett
 For powre men dayly fees
 How officers takes their fees
 Some yll and some yet worse
 As gode right as to pike there purse
 Deserbethe this not God's curse
 There conspens ys sooe grett
 Theye feze not to dischare
 If it were as moche moze
 Soe thay maye have the stowe
 Thus is ouze wethe undone
 By synguler commodome/
 For we are in dyuision
 Bothe for reght and religion
 And as some saythe
 We stagger in our saythe
 But excepte in hорт tyme
 We drawe by one lyne
 And agre with one accorde
 Bothe the plowghman and the lorde
 We shall soze rewe
 That ever this statte we knewe

The commons thus doth saye
If thaye hade it thay wolde paye

Vox populi vox Dei
A most nobell kenge
Consider well this thing

6.

Thus runnys the womeꝝ aboutt
 A mowngs the holle rowtt
 Thay cane nott byng aboutt
 Hit hathe suche hight degree
 The towne it ys soo skaatt
 That ebery man dothe wantt
 And somethynke not soo skarese
 But even as mbch to haffe
 Your marchant men doe saye
 Thaye fynde it dave by dave
 To be a matter strange
 When thay shold make excange
 One thother syde the see
 They are dyven to there plee
 For weze oure pounde some tyme
 Was better then thezes by nene
 Now ouzs when it comythe forthe
 No better then thezs is worthe
 Doe nor skant sooe gude
 They saye so by the roode
 How may the merchant man
 Be able to occupye than
 Exept when he comes here
 He sell his waze to dyze

E. ii.

He needes must have a lpyinge
 Or ells fye one the wyning
 This coyne by alteracyon
 Hathe brought this defolacon
 Which is not yet all knowen
 What myschiff it hathe cotwen
 They saye wo worthe that man
 That fyrst that coyne began
 To put in anye heade
 The mynde to such a reed
 To come to such a hieze
 For covites desyre.
 I knowe not what it menythe
 But thus thay saye and dremethe
 Ne ille per quem skandalum venit
 But this wyll upe graett pene
 Be for it be well agayne
 Graett pene and sore
 To make this as was befoze
 Your commons thus doe saye
 If thay hade it thay wolde paye

Vox populi vox Dei
 A most nobell kenge
 Consyder well this thinge

This matter is to trewe
 That many a man dothe rewe
 These sowrowes doe in fewe
 For powre men thay doe crye
 And saye it ys a wyse
 Thay saye thay cannott be herde
 But styll frome daye dissezed
 When thay have any swotte
 They may gowe blowe ther stwtt
 Thus gothe the common bzetwt
 The riche man wpll come in
 For he ys suze to wyne
 For he cane make is waye
 With hand in hande to paye
 Bothe to thicke and thyne
 Or ells to knowe the plesure
 My lozde is not at lesure
 The powre man at the dur
 Stands lyke an yslande cur
 And daze not over suze
 Excepet he gowe is waye
 And come another daye
 And then the matter ys mayde
 That the powre man withe his spade

Must no more this ferme in wayde
 But must gove use soume other trade
 For it ys soe agreyd
 That my ladye maisters mede
 Shall hyme expulle with all spede
 And our maister the landlord
 Shall have it all att his accorde
 His howse and ferme agayne
 To make there of his vttmost gayne
 For is wantage wylbe moze
 With shepe and cattell itto stoze
 And not to plowgh his ground no moze
 Except the fermer wyll azeze
 The rente hyer by holle yeze
 Yett must he have a syne toe
 The bargayne he may the knowe
 Whiche maketh the markett now soe deze
 That there bye fewe that maks good cheze
 For the fermer most sell his gosse
 As he maye be abell to paye for his howse
 Or ells for none payeng the rente
 A voyde at oure laydye dape in lent
 Thus the powre man shalbe shente
 And then he and his wyffe
 With there childdren all there lyfe
 Dothe crye owtt and band
 Uppon thes corfede covitys man

I sweze hy God omnipotent
 I feze that this presydent
 Wyl make vs all for to hent
 Crowe yow my lordes that be
 That God doth nott see
 This ryche manys charyte
 Per speculum Inigmate
 Pes es yowe ryche lordes
 Pitt is wrytten in Christs records
 That diuis lay in the fyre
 With Belshabube his fyre
 And patwper he a bowe satt
 In the sett of Abrams lape
 And was taken frome this troye
 To lybe allwape with God in poiye
 Powr commons thus do saye
 If thay hade it thay wold paye

Vox populi vox Dei
 O most nobell kenge
 Consyder well this thing

The prayse no less ys worthe
 Godds worde is well sett forth
 Hitt never was moze preched
 Nor never so playnely techede
 Hitt never was so halloed
 Nor never soe lyttell folloed
 Both of hyght and lowe
 As many a man dothe knowe
 For this ys playne perskrypsyon
 We have banyfchyd superstyfyon
 But styll we kepe ambyfyon
 We have showtt awaye all cloyfz
 But styll we kepe extorsynars
 We have taken theze lands for ther abbwele
 But we have conuertyd theme to a worse use
 If this talle be noe lye
 Ope lords this gothe a wyse
 A wyse a wyse ye gooe
 With many thengs mooe
 Duytt frome the Kengs hy waye
 The commons thus doe saye
 If thay hade it thay wold paye

Uox populi vox Dei
D most nobell King
Consyder well this thynge

And of all this sequell
 The fatutt I can not tell
 Put yowe together and spell
By lords of the counsell
 I feze al be not well
 Ame byssyon so dothe swell
 As it gothe by reportte
 A mowgs the grett sorte
 A wonderfull sortt of sylks
 That wor populi tyltis
 Of thes bottomeless welts
 That are est west and so forth
 Bothe by south and also north
With. ryche. ryche. and ryche
 With riche and to myche
 The powre men to be gylle
 With saccke and paccke to fyle
 With suche as we compound
 For an offys ij thousand pounde
 Howe maye suche men do reght
 Poure powre men to requytt
 Dutt of there rowbell and payne
 But they most gett it agayne
 By craft or such coaxyon
 By bybezey and playne extorcion

With many faylys mooe
 That I colde trewly schewe
 Ther never was suche mesyre
 Nor never soe moche ewzery
 Your powr men thus doe saye
 If they hade yt thay wold paye

For populi vox Dei
 O most nobell Keng
 Consider well this thing

And thus this yll of bytts
 Gost plentyfull of fretts
 Is suddenly decayed
 Powre men all most dylmayd
 They are soe over layde
 I feze and ame a hayde
 Of the stroke of Gode
 Wiche ys a pezelos rodde
 Praye/ praye/ praye/
 We never see that daye
 For yf that daye doo come
 We shall desleber and runn
 The father agaynst the sonne
 And one agaynst and nother
 By Gods blessed mother
 Or they begyne to hugger
 For Godessake looke a bought
 And stape be tymes this rought
 For feaze they do come owte
 I put you ought of dought
 There is no grett tust
 If trothe shoulde be discust
 Therefore my lordes take heede
 That this geze donot breede

At chesse to playe a maett
 For then it ys to latt
 We maye well proue a cheke
 But we shall have the wezke
 Yet ys not to be wondrede
 For thay are not to be numbred
 Hitt ys not one alone
 That thus dothe grownt and growne
 And makethe this pitious mone
 For it ys moze then wonder
 To here the infynytte nwmber
 Of powre men that doo howe
 By reſonne hitt moſt be ſooe
 Thay wyſche and doo connecter
 That my lordes graſſe and protector
 That cheſſe ys nowe erektor
 And formoſt of the rengo
 Under oure nobell kenge
 That he wolde ſee redreſſe
 Of this moſt graett exceſſe
 For he ys callyd dowttleſſe
 A man of graett pꝛōes
 And ſoo dothe here the fame
 And doth deſyre the fame
 Hiſ mynde thay ſaye is good
 If all wolde folowe hiſ mode
 Howe for to ſett the ſhame
 To keep ſtyll thiſ good name

He most delay all all excusis
 And ponyfche theſſe graett abbusis
 Of theſſe fynys and new ewlis
 That hane ſoo many mbus
 And ſtett and princypally
 Suppreſſe this ſhamfull ewzere
 Commenlye callyd husbandyze
 Fo yf there be noe remedye
 In tyme and that reght thortly
 It wyl brede to a plewzyle
 Wiche ys a graett innozympte
 To all youze graſis commynaltye
 Fo there is noe ſmalle nwmber
 But that this ſawlt dothe incumber
 Poure powze men thus doo ſaye
 If thay hade it they wolde pape

Vox populi vox Dei
 O moſt nobell Kenge
 Conſyder well this thyng.

Nowe at your gravis layfure
 If ye well see the fezure
 Of all the cheffe treafure
 Deped with the owght mefure
 Of the fubftans of your reme
 As it were in a dreame
 I well make an efteeme
 In the hands of a fewe
 The trowthe you to howe
 Howe this matter dothe gooe
 For I wyll not fpare
 The troythe to declare
 For troythe trowly ment
 Was never yett wente
 Nor never went halbe
 Note this texte of me
 If aityme be framed
 For feze some howold be blamed
 But it wyll not be shamed
 Hitt ys of fuche a ftrenghe
 Hitt wyll ower come at lenghe
 If now I shall not fayne
 The troythe to tell you playne
 Of thooſe that doo holde
 The fubftans and the goolde

And the tresure of this reue
 And shortly to calle
 All most they have all
 Att lest they have the tradde
 Of all that maye be mayde
 And first to declaie
 A brieve what they are
 To make short rehersall
 As well spyrtyual as temprall
 The lawers and the lawlorde
 The graett rybe and the recorde
 The recorde I mene ys he
 That hath offys or ells fee
 To serue oure nobull Kenge
 In his accomts and reconnyng
 Of his tresure surmountyng
 Lorde Chawncler and chawnclers
 Maisters of myntts and monyars
 Secundaies and surwayers
 Auditeers and recebeers
 Customeers and countrolleers
 Purwayers and prowlers
 Marchants of graett sallys
 Withe the maisters of woddysayles
 Withe the grassyers and regratteres
 Withe Mr Wyllyams of schepe maisters
 And suche lyke common wasteres
 That of erabel grownd maks pasters

And paye maisters suche as bythe
 With trappes your golden smythe
 With iij or iiij grett cloytheers
 And the holle lybell of lawers
 With thesse and there trayne
 To be byesse and playne
 Of there to myche gayne
 That they take for ther payne
 Hit ys knowin by certayne stowrys
 That they maynetene your gratus warys
 By the space of a holle yere
 Be it good chepe or deere
 Be thought we howolde withstande
 Bothe France and Skottlande
 And yett to leue enowght
 Of money waze and stufte
 Bothe in cattell and cozne
 To moze then they wer a bozne
 By patozomony or blude
 To merett soo myche gude
 Be cause thay be soo basse
 Thay welbe nedey and scarce
 For quod natura dedit
 Frome zentyll blude they ledeth
 And to forsse a chourlyche best
 Nemo attolleze potest
 Wett rather then they wold goo before
 They wolde helpe your grace with somewhat moze

For they be those that have the stowre
 Those be they I wyll warrant ye
 Thought ye take never a peny
 Of youre powre commynalltey
 This is tyme undowttlydye
 I dare, afferme it seyntly
 For yf this warlde doo holde
 Of forse ye most be holde
 To bowowe ther fyne golde
 For they have the stowre
 Your commons have no more
 We maye it call to lyght
 For it ys your awne reght
 If that your grase have nede
 Beleve this as youre cyede
 The powre men doo saye
 If they hade it they wold paye
 With a better wyll than thay

Vox populi vox Dei
 O most nobell King
 Consider well this thing

I D orthepest protector
 Bezeyn corrector
 And yow my lords all
 Lett not your ouer apall
 But knowke be tymes and call
 For thes graett etwolyes all
 We knowe the princypall
 That nedes more rehezfall
 If yow doo not redresse
 Be tymes this covitisnes
 Whi hede I wold to gage
 Ther welbe grett otw rage
 Suche rage as never was sene
 In any olde mans tyme
 Also for this perplexite
 Of thes that are most welthe
 Hit were a dede of charite
 To helpe them of ther pluzpse
 Hit comes by suche grette fyttis
 That it takes waye ther wittis
 Bothe in ther tresure and tellyng
 Or ells in byeng and selleng

I. ii.

If they of this were cesed
 Your grasse shoulde be well plesed
 And thay but lyttell dyscesed
 Of this covitous dropfye
 That bzengs them to this pluzfye
 Bothe the pluzfye and the gowt
 Ancuzabell to be holpe
 Except your grasse for petie
 Proved this forsayd remedie
 As docters holde opinion
 Bothe Ambrosse and Certullyon
 With the swifstake and the mynyon
 The gally and the roo
 That soo swyft dothe gooe
 Gooe and that a passe
 By the Berry Grace
 The Berry and the Edward
 God send them all well forward
 With all the hole fleet
 Whosse cowncell complett
 Sayth it is full mett
 That graette heds and dyscret
 Shoulde looke well to ther fett
 Amen I saye so be it
 As all your commons praye
 For youze louke helth awaye
 If thay hade it thay wolde paye
 With a better wyll then thay
 Aux populi vox Dei

Thus doth wytt and thus dothe saye
With this salme myserere mei
O most nobell Kenge
Consyder well this thinge
God save the Kenge

Finis of vox populi vox Dei

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